

Kathmandu -- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced today that it will provide an additional \$700,000 to the Tilganga Eye Center, through its American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program, to purchase commodities and equipment for the Eye Center's Institute of Ophthalmology.

USAID has provided \$3.9 million dollars since 2003 to build and equip the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology. This support has increased the Eye Center's space by one hundred thirty thousand square feet and has almost tripled the number of patients the hospital serves.

Dr. Carolyn Coleman, Acting Director of USAID/Nepal, remarked, "The Tilganga Eye Center is playing an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases and is also recognized worldwide for its work as a highly advanced research and training institute. With this additional funding from USAID, the goal of building a state-of-the-art refractive surgery unit at the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology can now be realized. I am confident that the hospital will make excellent use of the facilities for the benefit of all Nepalis."

"We believe that our services and training programs will cross geographical and political boundaries. With the advanced technology and facilities available in the new and improved Eye Center's Institute of Ophthalmology, Nepal is ready to become a global leader in eye care service and research," said Dr. Sanduk Ruit, Medical Director of Tilganga Eye Center.

The Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, a six-story hospital and research center, was built in partnership with more than fifteen donor nations and individuals, with USAID providing a significant portion of the assistance. The hospital was recently inaugurated on April 30, 2009 by the former Prime Minister, Pushpa K. Dahal, the former U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, Nancy J. Powell, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal, Susan Grace, and other dignitaries.